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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,

DECEMBER 27, 2002

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 27, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. "WAR GATE" IN SILOPI (SIRNAK)
(Sabah) Efforts are underway to open another border gate (with Iraq) in Silopi (Sirnak) to prepare possible after-effects in the event of a U.S. operation against Iraq. The new gate, Ali Riza Efendi, will be used for the passage of between 250-500 (sic 250,000-500,000) expected refugees and munitions transport. Upon advice from the Interior and Foreign Affairs Ministries, the State Ministry for Customs initiated the efforts and chose a location 15 kilometers south of Silopi for the proposed gate. Officials said a bridge would also be constructed on the Tigris River for direct access to the gate.

3. U.S. MILITARY DELEGATION IN BATMAN
(Milliyet) Runway repair works have been completed in Batman, which is among military airports to be used during the possible U.S. operation against Iraq. The runway, which was insufficient for warplanes, has been extended. Reservations have been made in three- and four-star Batman hotels beginning in January for U.S. soldiers. Three cold storages have been constructed on the Batman Air Base for use as morgues. Cumhuriyet reported U.S. officials who surveyed hotels and hospitals in Batman four months ago continue with their inspections. No measures have yet been taken in Diyarbakir.

4. TANKS ARE ON THEIR WAY
(Milliyet) While the proposed U.S. operation has entered Turkey's agenda, military activities intensified in the Southeast, where thermal cameras monitor borders 24 hours a day. Additional units were sent to the borderline, with armored units finalizing their preparations. Military vehicles transporting tanks were seen on the Diyarbakir-Mardin highway. Tanks sent from Mardin, Sirnak, Cizre (Sirnak) and Silopi (Sirnak) to Diyarbakir's Seventh Corps Command for maintenance are now being transferred to their duty posts.

5. HAKKARI PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE IRAQI REFUGEES
(Milli Gazete) The Hakkari Health Directorate announced having completed its preparations for a possible influx of refugees (from northern Iraq) in case of a possible U.S. operation against Iraq. The directorate will establish centers in Guzelkonak (Semdinli) and Uzumlu (Cukurca) villages to meet refugees' health-related needs. Health Director Dr. Tahir Ersoz said 32 personnel who will serve in these centers had received one month of training at the Civil Defense Directorate.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

6. CREDIT FOR ENTREPRENEURS
(Dunya) Disbank signed an "Entrepreneur Support Credit" agreement with the Kahramanmaraş Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Similar agreements had been signed in Ankara, Bursa, Diyarbakir and Gaziantep. Under the agreement, Disbank will provide small- and medium-scale industries (KOBİ) with fixed-interest and long-term commercial credits ranging from TL 5 billion (approx. USD 3,000) to 50 billion (approx.

USD 30,000), as well as letters of credit.
HOLTZ